

- Editorial -

A Time for Awakening

Most people's everyday view of life is clouded by worries over ordinary problems, so much so that few are able to really comprehend the joys of just being alive. It is easy to see why Thoreau says that "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." They are usually caught between the dilemmas of one day and the next, seemingly unable to escape the endless cycle of their lives. It usually takes spectacular events to jar them from their complacency, to wake them up, if only for a season, to the wonder of the world around them. Often Christmas is viewed as such an occasion. The mundane problems are dispelled by the festive spirit of the time. And people even sometimes pause (between shopping trips) to consider what they are really celebrating. Unfortunately, though, Christmas is only one day out of the year, and after the last gifts are exchanged and the hoopla over the new year subsides, people usually settle back once again into their own "lives of quiet desperation".

But it need not be that way. The idea of being continually awakened to the world around you need not die with the last candle of the holiday season. Granted, the problems of everyday life must inevitably occupy our minds; and we should never be lulled (as so many people are) into a false sense of euphoria about our problems or the world's. Being awake, however, involves a healthy balance between awareness and optimism, between the memory and the hope of Christmas.

The hope of Christmas seems more alive this year than it has been in a long time. "Peace on earth, good will toward men" is much more than just a hollow phrase to be quoted in Christmas programs. One of the reasons this is true is because of a change in national leadership. Surely, the quiet confidence about the nation's future exhibited by President-Elect Jimmy Carter will spread among the people in the coming year, not only through rhetoric but through concrete actions. But the feeling of optimism has to go beyond changes in national politics. The academic and personal problems that fill our minds, especially at this time of the semester, still demand solution, but they must be seen in the greater context of our college experience and they must be treasured for the possibilities they hold. The Christmas wish of the *Hilltop* editorial staff, then, is clear: may both the memory and the hope of that first Christmas be yours... as you are continually awakened to the world around you.

The Hilltop

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Viewpoint

Death Penalty Refutes Christian Teaching

Dear Editors,

It has now been nine years since there was an execution in this country. With the high crime rate, it will almost surely be threatening many death row prisoners. I believe the wishes of Gary Gilmore and Robert White to be executed should be followed through with. But, I also feel that it is sad that so many "quick to judge" people seize this as an opportunity to try to get rid of the rest of the death row inmates. It is now time for the American people to consider this serious issue which threatens over four hundred lives.

Deterrence to crime and biblical teachings are heard all too often as reasons for capital punishment. As for it being a deterrent to crime, the Supreme Court has said that

the results of such studies were inconclusive. And yet, there are those that want to have several hundred people executed on the basis of inconclusive studies. And, to the ones which want capital punishment on the basis of biblical teachings, ("An eye for an eye," etc.) I simply say that they have not been reading the New Testament. Try reading the eighth chapter of John.

As Christians, I believe our attitude should be one of forgiveness and rehabilitation. Surely in this season of peace and good will we ought to be able to turn our thoughts away from getting back at society's misfits to rehabilitation and help for all of them.

Sincerely yours,
Kirk Hall

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